

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 7, 2018

The Honorable Ben Carson, Secretary
United States Department of Housing and Urban Development

RE: Urge reversal of Trump Administration proposal to triple rents on poorest Florida families

Dear Secretary Carson:

As members of the Congressional Delegation from Florida, we write with grave concerns about your plan that would dramatically increase rents on the poorest Floridians.

This cruel proposal by your U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Making Affordable Housing Work Act, reflects a lack of compassion and understanding of affordable housing in our state. Among the misguided provisions, you propose tripling rents on those in severe poverty. According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, that alone would result in the eviction of 1.7 million Americans, including nearly one million children. Further compounding this problem is the way the proposal recalculates affordability. Local experts say perhaps most concerning is a provision to eliminate income deductions for families who pay medical or child care expenses. Under this proposal the majority of families will be paying more, even though they are already having to make choices between buying medicine and feeding their children. By failing to adjust income for spending on basic necessities and child care, it unfairly targets single mothers with steep rent hikes. As primary caretakers and breadwinners, single mothers are already doing the work of two parents. They have earned our support. Instead, HUD is proposing unaffordable rent hikes and homelessness with no justification.

At a time when 83 percent of the recently passed trillion-dollar tax bill is going to the top one percent of Americans, asking Congress to balance the budget on the backs of the most vulnerable is unconscionable. As representatives who care about our most vulnerable constituents, we stand prepared to work with you to pursue policies that would truly improve the state of affordable housing in Florida. As the economy continues to recover and more and more people move to Florida, even some middle-class families are finding housing unaffordable. We should continue to encourage development of new affordable units. In addition, we should be working together to make affordable housing accessible, specifically by reducing and ultimately eliminating waiting lists. For many of our neighbors, including struggling families, children, and seniors, the wait for rental assistance often stretches for years. We can more efficiently assist those in need by providing additional funding for cash-strapped public housing authorities and fully funding

rental assistance programs to keep up with need. Finally, rather than imposing punishing work requirements, we should support those able to work with improved employment opportunities and skills training. We have a real housing squeeze in Florida and your rent-tripling proposal will make it worse for families across our state.

We vow to vigorously oppose the Making Affordable Housing Work Act as drafted and urge you to reverse course on this proposal that would hurt our most vulnerable constituents.

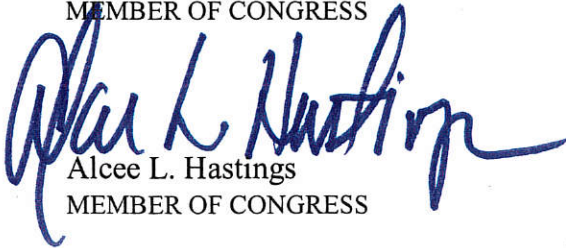
Sincerely,



Charlie Crist
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Kathy Castor
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Alcee L. Hastings
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



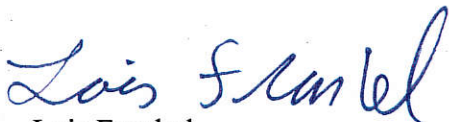
Debbie Wasserman Schultz
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